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# KLONDYKE AND FORTUNE



*The Experiences of a Miner who has acquired  
a Fortune in the Yukon Valley*

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## INTRODUCTION.

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FROM time immemorial, precious metals have been discovered in various portions of the globe. In the memory of living man there have been many sensational "strikes," which have set the civilised world ringing with excitement. The very mention of '49 conjures up memories of that unprecedented "rush" to the Golden Gate, when shops, factories, and offices throughout the United States were deserted, and master and man alike, joined in a helter-skelter race across the great American continent to the Californian El Dorado.

How many perished on that terrible journey of 3,000 miles of boundless prairies, trackless deserts, and fearful mountain passes, has never been ascertained. Their whitened bones scattered over the trail tell the tale of hunger, thirst, hostile redskins, pestilential valleys whence no living thing ever emerged—all

braved as other terrors have been, and will be braved again for the one great stake—gold.

Then came news of gold strikes in Carolina and Georgia, to be quickly followed by fabulously rich finds of silver in the Pike's Peak district of Colorado, and the world went mad once more. Whole cities created by the gold fever in '49 were as quickly depopulated in a race for the new silver mines, where a Denver cobbler, after having thrown down his last, at which he had toiled for twenty-five years, piled up three million dollars in two years.

Townships sprang up overnight, like mushrooms, on the wild, steep mountain slopes of Colorado, only to be abandoned when news came of rich gold finds in British Columbia.

The discovery of gold in Australia, the frenzied rush to golden South Africa, the fabulous stories of wealth in Western Australia, are all fresh in the recollection but forgotten in the latest extraordinary find, which in a few weeks has eclipsed all these others in size and form in which the dull yellow metal has been taken out—a new El Dorado in the freezing



North—the Yukon Valley, beside which all other goldfields pale into insignificance.

Pamphlets innumerable, issued by railway companies, by promoters and others having schemes to further, are already circulating broadcast, but amidst this plethora of matter relating to the Klondyke, it has been left to the editor of this little work to place before his readers the unbiased personal experience of a practical miner, who has returned from that region a modern Argonaut, laden with the spoil.

There are graphic accounts, lurid pictures, and even photographs (?) by artists, certainly *not* on the spot, all alike unreliable and misleading, gained as they have been from the statements of explorers.

The Editor, however, determined to gather facts for the guidance of hundreds, who, in the spring, will tempt Fortune in the new goldfields, and, having ascertained that Mr. Clemens, an experienced Californian miner, had returned with a fortune acquired in the Canadian Yukon, he at once took steps to

secure from this gentleman, not only useful facts, but matter interesting to fortune-seekers in the frozen North.

Mr. Clemens, it should be added in conclusion, has no "axes to grind," and having made his limit of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars has no interest in inducing others to go out nor in frightening them away from the new El Dorado.

# KLONDYKE AND FORTUNE.

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## CHAPTER I.

It was in the silver and lead mines of Idaho—certainly the roughest, wildest region in all the United States—that I commenced my career as a prospector and miner. Rough? Well, the prospect is about as unpromising as any in the Yukon Valley.

Plenty of bears—the very worst of all the tribe—the dreaded grizzly of the Rocky Mountains. Prospectors know the terror of the mountains, and give him a very wide berth indeed. In those portions haunted by the grizzly, it is taking one's life into one's

own hands to venture. He has an eye keener than any hawk, and can run like a deer.

There are regions in those mountains, where it would be simply suicidal to camp out. There is something about a "grizzly" which commands respect and attention. He does not avoid man: quite the contrary. If one crosses his path he simply "goes for" him.

After three or four years of life in these wilds I made my way to the more peaceful valleys of California, and started "washing-out" in Placer County, which, as its name implies is a region of "placer" mining, and good mining at that. There is plenty of profitable work, and, if not an immediate fortune, a realisation of the dreams of sudden wealth, which haunt the slumbers of the gold and silver miner.

It was a few years before the old "wander fever" took me again. I have had it before, but never so virulently as this time. I fancy it must have been the humdrum, quiet, easy

life in the sun-kissed valleys of the golden West that made me feel that my existence was too monotonous. Anyhow, I felt that impulse to take up my bed and walk—an impulse handed down to us through generations of nomads—an heirloom of our forefathers. I obeyed the impulse.

Through Oregon, into British Columbia I wandered and prospected for that will-o'-the-wisp, a big strike of gold—a will-o'-the-wisp, by the way, which was not to lead me into the morass of despair.

In the summer of '91 I found myself in the township of Calgary, N.W.T., without any very definite plan except to prospect away up in the North, out of the beaten track of prospectors.

I had heard that, in the previous year, Mr. Ogilvie, a surveyor in the employ of the Canadian Government, reported that gold undoubtedly existed in enormous quantities in the Canadian Yukon, but, although always quite as eager as any other

prospector in this vast continent to make a good "strike," I could not quite see how a gold mine or anything else could be of any earthly use to man if all the elements necessary to successful mining were absent. I was well aware that water must be scarce for many months in the year, that timber was rare, and that the climate was of the most rigorous. But still, the most desolate region in the world is attractive to the prospector if he turns up "pay dirt."

There was the rub. Even if the ground were strewn with diamonds it would be impossible to collect them, as food was not to be had for love or money. Then, again, there was still another argument against the Yukon Valley. The Americans on the Yukon and throughout Alaska had been "blowing" for many years past about the big deposits of gold, silver, copper, and heaven knows what all (perhaps even wooden nutmegs!), so that I took Mr. Ogilvie's statements with a large grain of salt.

In my many wanderings I had visited South Africa, and had the pleasure of meeting the Special Correspondent of the *New York Herald*, who informed me that on the Gold Coast of West Africa the sand in the streets sparkled with gold dust ! He conjectured that there was more gold back of Cape Coast Castle, as far as the land of the Ashantis, than in all South Africa, but that until a drainage system on a big scale was introduced, the pestilential swamps, the dreaded white mist arising from the decaying vegetation that destroyed human life at an enormous rate, proved too much for even the most enterprising of pioneers.

So the gold may be there and remain there, because, to work it, were an impossibility. So might it be with the Canadian Yukon, thought I. I have heard since, that the Government is making preparations for a vast system of drainage on the West Coast of Africa, for the purpose of opening up the country and making it habitable to

Europeans. For all I knew to the contrary this Yukon might be uninhabitable on account of the cold and the insurmountable difficulties in procuring supplies so far from trading posts.

Still it was worth trying. What have not hope, ambition, and—shall I say—greed overcome before?



## CHAPTER II.

FROM Calgary we went out three strong. As often happens in the backwoods settlements, and in frontier towns, prospectors meet, and those without any definite plans listen to those of others, and, if mutually agreeable, start out together. And in this connection let me tell you that, if a number of men, say eight, form a prospecting party pooling their interests, their individual chances of success are increased a hundred-fold. There is the saving in the weight of stores, where one camp stove, and other things too numerous to particularise, serve a whole party. Then there is the feeling of greater security, and last, but by no means

least, a party can divide at the camp, and using this as a base of operations can spread out over a large expanse of territory, and gain better results from such systematic prospecting than can a party of, say, two or three whose work is necessarily somewhat circumscribed. I would strongly impress this one point upon any of my readers who contemplate making the journey to the Klondyke this spring.

My two "new chums"—Harrison and Clewers by name—both experienced miners who had the grit to fight their weight in wild cats—brought up on the plains of the great North-West—fearless, strong and able-bodied, were just the sort to make their way after the gold supposed to exist up in the frozen North, though they would be compelled to go through the Polar regions to get it. And, although they shook their heads sagely when talking of this gold, I knew they took little stock in Mr. Ogilvie's report, nor in the rumours that

had filtered through Juneau and down into the South. But they were quite willing to go North or South or anywhere where there was likely to be some fair prospecting.

From Calgary the trail lies through a pleasant undulating country, widely different from that a thousand miles further north. It is small wonder that those who have faced the Chilcoot and the White Passes after the beautiful plains and the magnificently wooded foothills of the South, almost gave up the journey in despair. We tramped across a country made famous by the exploits of the great Indian counsellor Sitting Bull, and his Sioux warriors, and along the Rocky Mountain range to the famous goldfields of British Columbia. We crossed the Rockies over a pass that would give the Chilcoot points and beat it on all except one. It was below the snow line. But the eagles flapping near told us that man was an infrequent and unwelcome visitor in these parts.

Night overtook us on the summit of the pass, where we were forced to camp. But timber was fairly plentiful, and, with the brushwood, we soon had a fire, and were consuming a hearty meal of bacon, coffee and biscuit. Our stores contained other delicacies, but we carefully husbanded these, entering as we were a region unknown to us, with Juneau, our prospective point, several days' journey ahead. Whether we found gold or not, we were too seasoned to take any chances of being compelled to face the worst of all calamities on the trail—famine.

Before dawn we had bear meat—the last we were destined to enjoy for several months. The brown and black bear of the Rocky Mountains is not only edible, but the flesh is eagerly sought after by epicures. Bears infest the regions around the Yukon, but so far as eating the flesh, I would prefer to go on short rations.

The bear that suddenly loomed up in the

shadow of our camp-fire formed a night's sport. Fresh meat on the trail is a luxury, and while game abounds, there is scarcely any need to draw on one's stores.

The carcase, stripped of its hams and the magnificent pelt, was a feast for the vultures and the mountain lions, which kept up an incessant growling and screaming throughout the night.

In the morning, after a hearty breakfast, we started down the mountain pass and ere nightfall were safe and a good five miles on the straight road to the North again.

The road to Juneau was not marked by any extraordinary adventure. We fell in with parties of Indians who told us that there was gold "up North," but I think my comrades did not place much confidence in their statements. The redskins they had previously come in contact with—the Digger Indians of California, the lowest type of North American Indians—had given them a poor idea of the good traits possessed

by other tribes. The Indians of the Stick tribe are honest, industrious and truthful. These and French half-breeds were frequently met on the trail.

I have previously remarked that my brother-prospectors were not enthusiastic of success in the placer mines of the North. But I soon had evidence that they were just as superstitious as most miners, and possessed the true gambler's belief in tokens and signs.

To those who spend their lives in the great cities, the child-like simplicity of those who pass their days on the boundless plains and forest fastnesses, is often inconceivable. But to the children of the plains it is in the cracking of a tree branch, the flight of a bird, the swaying of the cactus, even in the fissures of the parched ground, that they learn to read the message of Fate. So it happens that what would appear to a "tenderfoot" a most trifling circumstance, is frequently quite the reverse to the dwellers on the prairie.

## CHAPTER III.

It is a common belief among miners that there exists a "mother lode"—a gigantic storehouse, or, perhaps, a series of storehouses of the dull, yellow metal. In 1849 Californians believed that they were on the verge of its discovery. The Klondykers' hopes are of finding this "mother lode."

All gold existed at one time in quartz ledges or veins. Earthquakes, glacier wear and volcanic disturbances have gradually levelled off some thousands of feet from the mountains in which these gold-bearing quartz veins existed. Immense ledges of quartz were thus broken up into boulders. Then, again, nearly every mining region was at one time or other the bed of a river. The gold-bearing quartz boulders,

falling into the rushing waters of some mighty river, have been ground and worn smooth or else broken into smaller boulders.

Gold, as is well known, is the most malleable metal, whereas quartz is very brittle. What is more natural, then, than that these boulders of quartz, subjected to the intense bounding and blows as they are rolled along in the rushing torrent of water, should be disintegrated? The quartz constantly breaking away, the gold, being more ductile, clings together, and finally the quartz is entirely broken away and there is left a little well rounded nugget of gold. It may be not larger than a pea, and still, when it left its mother ledge, it may, perhaps, have represented the entire gold in a mass of rock weighing several tons. Thus the nugget is formed. By reason of its great weight it seeks its lowest level, working its way down through the lighter rocks until it settles on bed-rock—the bottom of the river bed. Thus will the gravel near the bed-rock



almost invariably be found to contain the most gold.

In times gone by I had frequently discussed the existence of this parent vein, and the good fortune that awaited someone—the lucky discoverer of the source of nearly all the wealth of the world.

The folk lore of the Indians of North America is rich in legends, weird and awful, born of the life on the borders of dark, impenetrable forests and gloomy canons; or beautiful and poetic, inspired by the keen pure air and the flower-studded prairie. But, although I had heard many, none had ever alluded to gold, or any great discovery thereof.

Although not superstitious, I believe in the saying that “there is no smoke without fire.” So that the legends of the Indians may be considered to have some foundation, however slight.

I have previously observed that from time to time we fell in with parties of

Indians—half-clothed savages, who eke out a miserable existence to which I would not condemn the most worthless dog. One party of these Indians we met on the trail had among their number a man who had spent some time in Juneau, and who, having mixed with the whites, had become quite an authority on the region.

In reply to our questions, this Indian told us about gold that was brought into Juneau by his tribe, but that they did not find it in any appreciable quantity. But there *was* gold.

“And,” said the native, “there was much gold up North further.” How did he know it? His father had told him, and he had been told by his father before him. He piled up the fathers until we begged him to go on with his story.

“It was years and years ago—so many years that nobody could count them,” said the Indian, whose memory had been considerably freshened with a goodly plug of tobacco.

## CHAPTER IV.

“IT was years before the great trading company” — meaning the Hudson Bay Company—“had come into the country and established its posts, that this region was the home of many great nations of Indians, who hunted the bison and the bear and the moose which roamed in countless thousands over the broad plains, right up to the frozen north. And here, there dwelt in the south a chief, who was very great and powerful and who was dreaded by all the other tribes as far as the snow reaches. To this great chief there came one day a chief from another land in the North, laden with

presents and peace offerings, and among these presents were utensils carved out of a beautiful yellow metal that shone like burnished copper, and yet was more beautiful, and the heart of the great chief was seized with a longing to possess more of these beautiful things, and he bade the chief from the North welcome, and plied him with bear meat and other good things until his visitors slept. Then hastily summoning his followers the big chief ordered them to fall upon the sleeping guests and secure them, and when they awoke they found themselves prisoners securely bound. Then spake the big chief to the other: "Fear not, I would not harm ye. But lest some evil befall ye on the journey to the north, tell me where is this beautiful gold to be found, so that I may go and bring it back to my people."

Then the chief from the North made answer. The gold came from the land of the Great Bear where no man's foot had ever set before. For the Great Bear and

his warriors were fierce and jealous, and guarded every pass into their country and no man had ever come out alive. It was a gloomy and awful land where deep precipices shut out the light of day, and dreadful shapes flitted in the eternal twilight. Here, in the fastnesses of the towering mountain, the Great Bear and his warriors were secure from all invasion. But one day the Great Bear and his warriors appeared swarming out of the passes and over the precipitous sides of the frowning mountain range, and the chief and his followers fled in terror before them, for the followers of the Great Bear were mighty warriors. They carried off all the belongings of the chief; so the chief called in the medicine man—the witch doctor—the Dy-Wah, and bade him bewitch the Great Bear and all his warriors so that they might enter the land of the Great Bear and avenge themselves. And the witch doctor—the Dy-Wah—went forth, and with medicines and incantations and big fire

came even to the mountains, and the Great Bear and his followers dared not come forth. And the witch doctor led the big chief and his tribe over the mountains and into the land of the Great Bear chief who was so fierce and cunning, and they did battle with him with medicine and fire for three days and three nights. And the Great Bear hid himself in the mountains and came not forth when the great chief entered his lands. And he came with many warriors, and searched the country of the Great Bear, and in the foot of the mountain one of the warriors, who had gone on in front of the others, shouted loudly that he had found the treasure of the Great Bear, for, in a mighty cavern, there rose out of the earth a big, big mound of the yellow metal, that reflected a stray beam of the setting sun, and made the eyes of the great chief and his braves nearly blind, so beautiful was it. And while the chief and his warriors secured as much of the treasure as they could carry away with

them, a dreadful noise arose in the mountains, such screams and roars as the braves had never before heard. And the witch doctor spoke, saying that the evil spirit of the mountains was jealous of his storehouse, and would surely kill them did they remain. And then came flashes of fire that showed horrible shapes in the caves, and the chief and his followers fled out of the gloomy mountains, back into their own country, and many were blinded by the flashing fire and, in their madness, fled into the caves of the warriors of the Great Bear, and were eaten up. And the Great Bear had once more descended with his braves and laid waste the land. So that they had come to the land of the big chief, whose power was great, to implore him to send his warriors to kill the Great Bear. The great chief called the witch doctor, and summoning all his followers, they went forth to do battle with the Great Bear. But in crossing the mountains that were between the country of

the great chief and the little chief, the evil one brought snow down and blinded the warriors, so that many fell and perished, and only a few came out alive. And since that time no man had seen the golden mountain.

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## CHAPTER V.

THE legend was, of course, only one of countless thousands current among the Indian tribes. But what struck me as peculiar was the fact that the Indians were ignorant of the existence of gold in their own country until 1880. Yet here was a tradition relating to what was undoubtedly a great out-cropping of gold, a form of vein of which these Indians could certainly know nothing. This legend then, pointed to the existence of that great "mother lode," the very mention of which has set many a miner's heart beating with wild hope, and thrown many into the very abyss of despair.

My companions were most impressed with the story. Here, they argued, was gold, the existence of which the Indians were ignorant.

If there was any foundation for the story, then there must be, somewhere, North, in some unexplored mountain region of the Arctic circle, within reach, quartz ledges that carry the metal, not in strings as it was, and is, found in California and Australia and South Africa, but in slabs which could be quarried like marble!

Truly a fantastic idea and one which, if correct, would set the world hunting for some other standard of value.

The man who would strike upon but just a spur of that mother-lode would be possessed of wealth beside which the millions of California and Australia would pale into insignificance, and the riches of the Rothschilds, the Vanderbilts and all the other multi-millionaires be but a trifle.

I remarked, before, that my comrades were not so enthusiastic as I was of ultimate success in the North. But the legend of the artless Indian changed all that. From passively following my plans they actively furthered them.

All my arguments were as nothing compared with this "yarn," or whatever it might turn out to be, in spurring them on.

Over the camp fire that night we discussed the matter earnestly, and ere we slept we had settled and decided upon going North until we found gold.

And at Juneau we expected to pick up information that would guide us. Our plan was to strike north-west from Juneau and explore the Copper River, which is credited with being enormously rich in gold, although no one has ever come back with any.

But if gold existed there we had a fair field and no favour. Prospectors were not frequent visitors, then, to those parts, and our arrival in Juneau was quite a little event,

particularly when it was discovered that we were not a party of "dead broke" (stranded) miners.

## CHAPTER VI.

A FEW days after our arrival we learnt that the Indians had been in the habit of bringing gold to Juneau in small quantities for many years.

The first discovery of gold, in the quartz district of which Juneau is the centre, was made by two pioneer prospectors, Richard Harris and Joseph Juneau. At the beginning of the summer of 1880 these men started in a canoe from Sitka, to prospect the mainland coast. August 15 they discovered gold in a stream, which they afterwards named Gold Creek. Their provisions became exhausted, and, consequently, they

did not dare to ascend the stream to its source, but they did bring back with them 150 pounds of gold quartz and 13 grains of dust. They hustled around and procured another outfit, and hurried back to Gold Creek. They found its source in a little round valley, enclosed by steep glacier-capped mountains.

This spot they named Silver Bow basin, after a place of that name in Montana. On the slopes of the mountains encircling the basin, gravel was found, worth from 15 to 30 cents per pan, and quartz that seemed to have been splashed with gold. October 4 Juneau and Harris, aided by three natives, located their choice of placer ground, and in a month filed eighteen quartz claims. They organised the Harris Mining District, adopted local rules, and staked off a townsite at the mouth of the creek, which they named Harrisburg. They then returned to Sitka with gold valued at \$14,000.

As usual, great excitement followed.

Every one in the quiet town who could procure boats, canoes, or steam launches rushed off for Harrisburg. The ground was rapidly staked off, and soon there was quite a city at this point. In 1881 the town's name was changed to Rockwell in honour of Lieutenant Rockwell, of the United States Navy. Later, at another meeting of miners, the place was re-christened Juneau, in honour of Joseph Jeneau. John Pryor, Antone Marks, Frank Berry, James Rosewald, and William Mehan discovered placer and quartz on the beach of Douglas Island, four miles from the town. They began working the placer early in March, and washed out 27 ounces of gold in three days. The first shipment of gold from this new camp amounted to 84 ounces. This claim, still known as Ready Bullion, yielded about \$12,000 in 1881, \$30,000 in 1882, and in 1884 was sold to John Treadwell. Here was the beginning of the famous Treadwell mines.

Juneau is by no means a lively place, and cannot be compared to some of the mushroom frontier towns further South. It is in brief, a "one horse show," and, gloomy at that. Prospective Klondyke explorers should avoid it, as well as *all* American cities on the road to Klondyke—from San Francisco to Seattle, Tacoma, and to Juneau. The storekeepers, who profess to "fit out" miners and travellers, are unloading the most useless rubbish at famine prices to those going to the new El Dorado, and they content themselves with the consolation, "well, they can't come back 2,000 miles to make a kick about it!"

Of course, since miners have come down over the Chilcoot and the White passes laden with gold dust, Juneau has blossomed out considerably, and has added all sorts of attractions, including gaming tables, which are illegal only when they cease to be profitable to the officials who wink at them. I will have more to say of outfits presently.



Gold, we learnt, was fairly plentiful around Juneau, and men were washing out enough for "grub" in three or four hour's work.

But our plans received somewhat of a damper, and we were compelled to alter them quickly. We had intended to take a north-west trail out of Juneau, but the good people of that American frontier town convinced us that to prospect around the Copper River would be running such awful risks that, even if gold nuggets were to be picked up like walnuts, Juneau would let them lie. The Copper River has the reputation of being extremely rich.

The inhabitants of Juneau had also their traditions, handed down from the early pages of the Russian history of Alaska, regarding immense fortunes around the Copper River region, but no one who had ever prospected up that river had ever returned alive. The last man known to have faced the Indians of the Copper River—the fiercest tribe in all

the Western hemisphere—was a Russian pioneer trapper, who, with eight men, started for the gold beds, but was never seen or heard of again. Since that time the threats of the Copper River tribe had been effectual in keeping others away. The only way to visit the Copper River would be with a troop of three or four hundred men armed to the teeth and backed by a few Maxim guns. As this game would not be worth the candle, we decided to leave the blood-thirsty tribe of 3,000 Indians to await some foolhardier adventurers to undertake the expedition.

Under the circumstances the North-West was closed to us. There remained then only the North, and very little information could be gleaned as to routes, except that a waterway extended there—how far, no one seemed to know or care. There was nothing there but salmon fishing, and then only “running” salmon. Thereupon, we decided to fit out in Juneau and prospect North, going down a

portion of that great waterway extending from Lake Linderman, making our camp on some likely spot on the route.

Our outfit completed, one morning early in June we packed all our stores on the small coasting steamer running to Ty-A to commence our prospecting voyage into the unknown North.

## CHAPTER VII.

It may interest many readers to know what actually constitutes an outfit from a miner's point of view, and what impedimenta is absolutely necessary for the welfare of a party of three miners in the Yukon district.

Some of the articles might be considered superfluous, but three experienced miners selected this outfit as being suitable and necessary .—

Flour, 10 sacks.

Bacon, 300 lbs.

Beans, 150 lbs.

Dried peas, 50 lbs.

Rice, 50 lbs.

Rolled oats, 50 lbs.

Sugar, 50 lb. case.  
Tin pans.  
Tin cups.  
Frying pan and coffee pot.  
Lard, 60 lb. case.  
Evaporated apples, 25 lbs.  
Raisins, 10 lbs.  
Evaporated potatoes, 125 lbs.  
,, onions, 5 2 lb. cans.  
,, cabbage, 10 2 lb. cans.  
Baking powder, 5 1 lb. tins.  
Condensed milk, 1 case, 48 lb. tins.  
Candles, 1 box, 25 lbs.  
Oil, 15 gallons.  
Coffee, 25 lbs.  
Tea, 15 lbs.  
Salt, 20 lbs.  
Pepper, 4 lbs.  
Mustard, 2 lbs.  
Corned beef, 24 tins, 2 lbs. each.  
Sausage, 24 tins, 2 lbs. each.  
Vinegar,  $\frac{1}{2}$  gallon.  
Soap, 12 1 lb. bars.  
Matches, 8 bunches.  
Tobacco, 1 butt, 10 lbs.  
Four picks.  
Four shovels.

Three gold pans.

Two pairs rubber boots each.

Two pairs overalls each.

Three suits buckskin.

Large rabbit skin rug or robe each.

Heavy underwear.

Fur caps.

Water boots.

Mocassins.

Thick wool mitts—NOT gloves.

Sleeping bags of fur.

Snow goggles.

Sailmakers' needles, wax ends, thread, needles.

3½ lb. axe, nails, hammer, saws, pitch and oakum for boat building and 50 feet 5⁄8-inch rope.

An 8 by 10 wall tent (very heavy duck or drill).

One small Yukon stove of sheet iron and three or four lengths of telescope pipe. The stove is far preferable to the camp fire, as it consumes less wood, gives out greater heat, and it has been proved that those who sit round the open fires are more liable to snow blindness.

Saccharine could be carried instead of sugar.

Those intending to winter in the Klondyke region should adopt the Siberian or native dress of walrus boots, fur trousers, and a

*tarka*, an upper garment with hood combined and made from the fur of the marmot.

Those who imagine that all a prospector has to do is to pocket his pipe and tobacco and pack his handbag and be off will gain some idea of the cost of fitting out a prospecting expedition with necessaries only.

Besides these articles, a camp stove and other necessaries will turn the scale of supplies at  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tons for three men. At a rough estimate, a party of three can fully equip themselves for a nine months' tussle with King Frost in the Klondyke at a cost of, say, \$900, or \$300 apiece, whereas single-handed the same could not be purchased for less than \$500.

To this, of course, must be added the very serious item of carriage across any of the passes debouching into the interior. These charges have vastly increased since earlier days, Indians charging as high as 15 to 20 cents a pound for transport! And many refusing to carry goods further than the

summit at the former figure. It is strange that when the rush set in later the trials and hardships of the passes seemed to increase, owing in a great measure, no doubt, to the breakneck race, to be first at the goal—a goal, where there was really elbow room for a hundred thousand more. We reached Ty-A, or Dyea, which is but a short journey from Juneau, at the headwaters of the Sound.



## CHAPTER VIII.

DYEA, a small, miserable settlement, has always been a starting-point for the few miners and trappers who have tempted Fortune in the mines and forests of Alaska. It is almost in sight of the Chilcoot Pass, a trail over and through the mountains, which has for some occult reason earned the *sobriquet* of "the *dreaded* Chilcoot Pass." From accounts that I have read since my return, I could almost imagine the Chilcoot Pass to be a second Matterhorn, the ascent of which was only to be attempted with great risk, and accomplished at the price of severe physical endurance and even suffering.

It is certainly not a picnic trip over the Chilcoot. There are many other passes that are much easier to negotiate, and there are other reasons why it should be avoided—reasons I will explain later. Hundreds of tourists annually undertake the ascent of Pike's Peak, Colorado, certainly a far more difficult feat than the tramp over the Chilcoot Pass. Imagination carries some people a very long way indeed!

In the days of which I speak, however, the various passes were known only to a few Indians and pioneer trappers. But we had no time nor inclination to explore all the passes to ascertain which was the most accessible. We knew that the Chilcoot Pass opened into the country we wished to enter, and accordingly arrangements were made with the Indian carriers to transport our stores.

A gradual ascent of twelve miles from the steamboat landing brought us to the Sheep Camp. Here many prospectors and

others camp for the night for fear of being overtaken on the summit—an unnecessary precaution to hardy men, in fact the only sort needed in Klondyke.

We started from Stone House before daybreak, and the sun had been in the horizon about an hour when we reached Sheep Camp, whence the ascent becomes very steep to the summit, about five miles, the last two miles particularly so. In this last stage the grade sometimes resembles the roof of a house, yet there is absolutely no danger from crevasses or precipices. The discomforts are certainly great. Up to one's knees in slush and snow for several hours is not perhaps a pleasant introduction to the first breath from the icy North. For, at the summit, the climate is most severe, and amply foreshadows what is in store for the hardy explorer further north.

Although much has been said of the superiority of the white trail, it is a fact that of all those who reached the Klondyke

presumably *via* the latter, not half of them really used the pass. Instead, they scrambled up the sides of the mountains 350 feet above the pass. The reason they have done this is that the pass is full of boulders and belies its name, it being practically impassable.

The mountains are steep, and although the trail along the Skaguay River bank is an easy grade, the precipitous points of the boulders entirely block portions of the pass. These can only be removed by the judicious use of dynamite.

The plans so far laid down for the improvement of traffic includes a tram line, or a "sled cable," over the so-called "dreaded" Chilcoot Pass.

Many parties, well equipped, and with every prospect of holding out during this winter, have never been heard of since leaving Juneau, Dyea, and other points. The little crosses that here and there mark the trail account for some of these, but a

much larger number are missing, how many—alas!—it is impossible to tell. In the canyons that intersect the passes great landslides, from which there is no escape, are of frequent occurrence. The rapids of the White Horse and Miles Canyons have engulfed a great number. Others have no doubt perished miserably from hunger.

## CHAPTER IX.

THAT there will be countless hundreds who will start out in the Spring and never return, is, unfortunately, both possible and probable. But, with prudence, care and forethought, a man may journey to the Klondyke with as much safety as he now proceeds to his daily vocation.

That the hardships of a journey to the Klondyke are very great is not to be denied, and it is well that this should be thoroughly understood and appreciated by those who imagine themselves fitted for pioneer work in the new goldfields. The following letters from a pious, God-fearing Teuton, illustrates

some of the hardships from the point of view of a "tenderfoot." These two letters, addressed to his wife in California, reveal a pathetic side of the "rush" to the dreary desolate regions of the Yukon. Here is a "greenhorn" who, with plenty of pluck and grit, has succeeded in surmounting obstacles which, in his estimation, were, at first sight, not to be overcome. His views of the journey will, no doubt, be of interest. The first letter bears the superscription:—

"SHEEP'S CAMP, ALASKA,

"*April* 12, 1897.

"A last opportunity presents itself to send you a few lines before we reach our destination. Do not expect, however, a description of the superhuman labours we have had to perform to get thus far. We have been packing our goods ever since the first of this month, when we left Dyce. We carried them from mountain to mountain, travelling incessantly back and forth until we now

have the 1,200 or more pounds all here. The mountains get steeper as we progress, and fifty pounds at a time are now too much for me to carry. Both my feet have given out, and in each leg I have a wound the size of a dollar and a quarter of an inch thick due to the friction of one leg against the other as I staggered under my load.

“I have been lying in the tent here for two days, unable to get any further. Others are faring no better, however, as there is a fearful blizzard raging above us in the pass. To-morrow we shall try to start out afresh. May God help us over.

“Most of the travellers have their baggage carried by Indians, but you know that such a privilege was not for us. On every side the snow is from six to eight feet deep, and the sled tumbles from side to side going over a rock, only to slide down upon our tired bruised bodies an extra blow as it passes on. Still, we are mounting higher and higher, and not a word of complaint is



heard. It seems to me that one watches the other, wondering how he stands the fearful journey.

“Our tent shakes and strains at the strong fastenings which hold it down and keep it from blowing away or crushing under the snow driven continually against it.

“Right opposite the tent there is a mountain about 1,500 feet high and 400 feet wide; perhaps it hides other and more terrible travels from us. Here I must stop, as the gentleman, a German merchant, who is going to take this to Juneau for me, is anxious to be going. Fritz sends greeting to his mother.”

The letter bears the postmark, “Dyea, April, 18th.” The second letter is brief and contains a hint of the trials passed through in crossing the Chilcoot:—

“ON THE KLONDYKE RIVER,

“*June, 12, 1897.*

“At last! At last! We reached here to-day. What we have lived through I will not trust to pen and paper; the many little crosses on the road here—they count up over a hundred—speak only too plainly of the innumerable dangers of this terrible journey. Let us rather pass over our experiences in silence, for surely we are fortunate to have reached here. Now we must get to work.

“The news of the gold strikes, though I feared it might be, is not exaggerated. On the contrary, all the stories are surpassed by the facts. There are fellows here of doubtful calling who since last fall have gathered in over \$100,000; two brothers have over \$150,000. As is always the case, however, the whole of the little gold-bearing valley is from top to bottom taken up completely, and new-comers are advised to make new discoveries in some other valley

or hire themselves out to those who own the claims in the old ones. Work is well paid, it is true, but everything is very dear, and some things cannot be had at any price. Last winter a sack of flour cost \$100 ; now the price is \$6. Our supplies will soon be used up, and my first earnings must be invested in necessities.

“June 19th.—The day before yesterday the first steamer from St. Michael’s came up the river and will leave again to-day, taking the mail in all probability. I therefore seize the opportunity to add a few lines. We were in a great hurry to get here, and now learn that for a month work cannot be begun in the mines. Although the roses and the most beautiful flowers have been blooming since yesterday, still we can but dig down a few inches without striking ground frozen hard as rock. There is all kinds of work going on in this mushroom city ; still there are plenty of idle men. If there is not a real gold mine for each, there

is work for willing hands at wages ranging from \$10 to \$25 a day."

After passing the summit the trail down to the lake is in good condition. From the summit to the headwaters of the Yukon at Lake Linderman is some 13 miles, and ere nightfall we were safely over the pass and encamped on the wooded shores of the lake, to await the arrival of our supplies, which were being packed over by instalments. This Chilcoot Pass has always been a favourite route with pioneer Yukoners and the Indians. There are other trails being followed, some of them vastly easier than the Chilcoot, but I do not number the White Pass among these. By next Spring vast improvements could be made in the passes, not only with cable lines and trams, but by a judicious use of dynamite. If this were done the White Pass would be infinitely preferable to the Chilcoot.

From Skaguay, situated on the same arm of the sea as Dyea and two miles away,

around a rocky headland to the east and south, is over White Pass. This pass is 2,500 feet high. The distance to Lake Linderman is about the same as by the Chilcoot Pass, being about twenty miles.

The trail is, or was, early in the year, rough and muddy, and a large number of pack horses have been killed on this trail during the season of 1897, the sharp rocks under the mud and the slippery footing causing them to fall, shattering their hoofs and breaking their legs or throwing them over the bluffs.

Down the rivers and lakes the journey is made by boats, the same as by way of the Chilcoot Pass.

By the Stickeen route the start is made from Fort Wrangel, where transfer is made to the river steamers, to Telegraph Creek at the head of navigation on the Stickeen River, 120 miles above Fort Wrangel.

The portage from Telegraph Creek to Hootalinqua Lake, about 120 miles, is

through a partly open and partly wooded country, somewhat rolling but not rough. A pack trail runs from Telegraph Creek to the head of the lake. But the portage makes this route the worst of all.

At the head of Hootalinqua or Teslin Lake there is plenty of timber for whip-sawing lumber to build boats for the voyage of 500 miles down the river to Dawson, or lumber may be purchased at the small sawmill now in operation there.

The trip down the lake and river may be safely made in a small boat, or by the steamer which plies on the route from the head of the lake to Dawson. The lake is about 100 miles long, flowing into the Hootalinqua River and down the Yukon.

This route requires more time than by the Chilcoot Pass, the portage of 120 miles from Telegraph Creek to Hootalinqua Lake requiring five to seven days.

The Dalton trail leaves tidewater at Chilkat, a landing to the west and north of

Dyea, and runs over a pretty rough pass to the north of Chilcoot Pass, continuing to the westward of the lake country and striking the Yukon above Fort Selkirk, a distance from Chilkat of about 400 miles. This is the usual route for driving in beef cattle, as the pasturage is good all the way over to the river.

The Chilcoot Pass is quite impracticable to horses and dogs, and certain company promoters and others with "axes to grind" are making the most of this difficulty. If the contemplated plans for a sled cable (a cable line to which sleds could be attached and hauled over the pass) over the Chilcoot be carried out, this pass will, of course, get a large share of the traffic from the Western country. It lies in the hands of the people who have interests at the passes to make them thoroughly practical, but the "bluff" of the companies who run steamers, and the tall talk of the inhabitants of Skaguay and Dyea, do not alter the condition of the

passes which, at this late date of writing, are passes only in name.

It is safe to assume that, this Spring, some 50,000 people will be making their way through the mountain defiles into the land of gold and eternal frost, and then the romance of the Chilcoot Pass will be knocked on the head.



## CHAPTER X.

WE camped at the head of Lake Linderman, which, a year later, was destined to witness such strange sights—a dreary enough district, but where timber was to be had in plenty. We at once set about making preparations for sailing the lakes and rivers to a likely spot for encamping and prospecting. We were detained several days building our boats, of which we constructed two, each capable of holding us and all our belongings, and, game being at hand, although not plentiful, we saved our stores by a couple of hours' hunting daily.

Timber, I remarked before, was plentiful.

But forest-fires may sweep over the district at any time and wipe out the supply. This suggested the practicability of collapsible rafts or portable boats as a great saving of time. With even three experienced men, accustomed to the work in logging camps, it was several days before our boats, built in the Indian fashion, were fairly launched. An enterprising individual who would run half a dozen boats on the lakes and rivers for four months in the coming year would discover another means of tapping Klondyke's riches.

There is a good field for enterprise in this and other directions, as, with mechanical means for carrying passengers and supplies over the summits of the passes and then along the great chain of lakes and rivers to the mouth of the Klondyke River, the time will be vastly shortened and the expense greatly reduced.

It was August, and we were fully alive to the fact that before many weeks all the

passes and lakes would probably be frozen up and covered in snow, and travel become difficult, if not impossible. With our flotilla in readiness, we had also all our plans settled.

We were to sail, and row, and carry, all the way through the lakes and rivers as far as the Pelly River, at Fort Selkirk, nearly 300 miles of waterway, and then camp and prospect upon its inhospitable shores.

An uneventful sail across the Linderman, a distance of six miles—the boats behaving splendidly—and into the river connecting that lake with Lake Bennett, we soon entered the latter, a magnificently wooded waterway, on the shores of which we camped for the night.

Across Lake Bennett, 24 miles, is no great exertion for sturdy pioneers, and through Caribou Crossing, two miles, brought us into Lake Tagish.

The daily life on the lakes and rivers is scarcely worth recording. After we had

passed Lake Bennett we were not able to depend upon our guns for subsistence ; but we had done so well in this direction that our stores were scarcely broached, an important consideration for prospectors in an unknown country.

At certain points on the journey through the great waterway are parts where, on account of obstructions or dangerous rapids, it is impossible to pilot a boat, and these are known as "Portages," a French Canadian expression, which means "carrying places." Here everything has to be unshipped, and stores and boats are carried to the next open water. These, "portages," are a very serious matter, occupying a vast amount of time and a tedious dragging of stores overland, the worst one, however, being, as I pointed out before, by the Skaguay trail, where there is a "portage" of 120 miles, whereas the Chilcoat Route has but two very short "portages." It would be possible at a moderate outlay to make the rivers on

the latter route navigable their entire length.

And while on the subject of "portages" it is necessary to point out the great desirability for every member of a party to be able, at a pinch, to carry a load of, say, 60 pounds. An emergency might arise when the would-be explorer would find it extremely awkward not to be able to shoulder his pack and effect a forced march of 15 miles.

The passage of the White Horse Rapids safely passed we find ourselves once more in open water journeying 16 miles down the Tahkeena River to the head of Lake Le Barge on the shores of which we pitch camp. It was getting colder as we proceeded north, and already the icy wind was making itself felt. Those were days of careful sailing, always on the lookout for snags or other dangers that might wreck our boats, and with them, all our hopes. This journey is only relieved from monotony by the care that is required in passing through rapids and over other

obstructions. To men used to pioneer work in Colorado, California, and British Columbia, the prospect opened up in a voyage through the chain of lakes and rivers is not by any means an inviting one. Nature certainly sadly neglected this region when dealing out her favours, for a more desolate spot it has never been my lot to cast eyes upon. The desert wastes of the West were, as one of my comrades graphically put it, "a fool to it."

But there was not much time to ruminate, for it was late in September now, and the first snow storm of the season had swept over the mountains, an indication that the same thing was likely to occur again, or continue steadily. There was, therefore, no time to be lost in getting into winter quarters. The cold was already making itself felt and in a short time the lakes and rivers would be frozen over and rendered impassable except to dogs and sleds in an emergency.

The dog used for this work is large, gaunt, long-haired and wolfish, and will make 50 to 70 miles a day with a load that a man could scarcely haul at a walk. Six dogs make a good team, though the native packers sometimes have as many as a dozen in a pack.

The rule of the Hudson Bay packers is about 100 pounds to the dog and six in a team. These animals weigh from 40 to 70 pounds. They are well trained, and do not get sore feet.

They are fed on cheap bacon, horse meat, corn meal, or, in fact, anything that is eatable. In and around the Klondyke their food is dried salmon. Dogs of every description are found on the trails, besides the natives, and are a great help.

Any kind of dog will answer the purpose; though large, long-haired ones are preferable, dogs that can stand the cold and the long trips over the ice and snow are used by miners and prospectors in making trips about the

country, a man and dog often being seen together pulling on a sled.

Native dogs are worth from \$75 to \$150. It requires an expert to handle a team, and unless conditions are favourable, it is hardly worth while for a novice to make the experiment.

These animals are vicious and snappy, and give one to understand that they are mere beasts of burden, not friends of man.



## CHAPTER XI.

WITHOUT much difficulty we reached Fort Selkirk, a trading post established years ago, and which is, at rare intervals, visited by a small steamboat—one of a fleet of three—which makes three or four trips a year during the short summer season up the Yukon River between St. Michael's to Circle City—the largest log cabin town in all North America—and Forty Mile. The first of these trips, after the ice breaks up, is extended to carry supplies to Sixty Mile and Fort Selkirk.

We journeyed up the Pelly River some 20 miles ere we pitched upon a site for our winter quarters. With logs we built a very

comfortable cabin, with a door and a window, and we also made a rough table and stools, and soon had a comfortable winter camp from which to prospect. -

When our preparations were completed, and, knowing we had a camp to fall back upon, we started out prospecting along the river bed and up the creeks. There were no claims to stake out and no wrong measurements to dispute with the officials, no claim-jumping. We simply owned all in sight until some other prospectors should come along and, if they struck it rich, cause a rush to the district.

We were not long in discovering what we sought, and I may say that in one short morning we had the gold fever so bad that there was no holding us.

There in the river bed and in the banks of the creeks was evidence sufficient to turn the heads of any miner who had not seen the riches of the Canadian Yukon.

In the bottoms of the creeks the sand was

speckled with the dull yellow metal, and in the banks the gold turned up at a depth of three or four feet.

Here, for a few years at least, it would be only necessary to wash out a couple of panfuls of dirt every day to earn a livelihood, and two or three years' hard work would make us rich men. It was pleasant to contemplate this bright vista, and to reflect that we had the whole region, as far as the eye could reach, to ourselves.

We were not long washing a few panfuls, and, to our great surprise, we found it pan out three to four dollars a pan. At this rate it would be easy for three miners to turn out and wash out a couple of hundred dollars a day, provided the "pay dirt" continued as rich all the way through.

How we scarcely slept that night, and the number of plans we formed for working at the dumps in the winter, need not be gone into here. But, suffice it to say that I intimated that my limit was two hundred

and fifty thousand dollars; that that had been my limit for many years, and that the day when I should be in possession of that amount I would give up pick and shovel and go out of the business. Those were happy times, when we enjoyed the reality of our dreams of sudden wealth. And was this, then, to lead to the discovery of the mother lode? We decided to prospect up to the source of the river whence the auriferous gravel has been washed down. But here another difficulty arose which caused us to regret that we had not a small army at the back of us.

For seventy miles we followed the bend of the river where it forks to the north and south, and the source of the river was apparently as far away as ever. But not so the bears. In the summer they swarm down to the rivers and feed upon the "running" salmon that dash up in millions, and, while it lasts, Bruin thrives and fattens. But it is only a short season

of good cheer, and, when the salmon season terminates, the bears lead a most precarious existence, regarding a stray prospector, or an Indian, as a dispensation of Providence.

At these times the bears, famished and goaded by hunger, will not hesitate to attack a lone prospector or even a camp. And on the Pelly River they are positively dangerous. The flesh of this bear, tainted with fish and ill-nourished, is not the bear meat of the North-western States or British Columbia, where Bruin can eat his fill of nuts and fruits all the year round.

The Indians eat the meat of the northern bear, but then they are not very fastidious.

As the winter was fast freezing the river and the bears had become famished, we decided to leave the exploration of the Pelly River source until the summer, and in the meantime to get out, and wash as much of the dirt as we could while the water lasted, and, before it and the earth finally froze up, to get a shaft sunk below

the frozen line about eighteen feet. The short but somewhat torrid summer serves to thaw but three feet below the surface, which is eternally frozen to a depth of eighteen feet, the first month of the Arctic winter freezing this thin layer up again. It is then only possible to prospect and dig by building huge fires on the rock-like ground, and so thaw it sufficiently to get a pick into it.

Some idea can be formed of the difficulties in handling pay dirt in the winter, when it is stated that dynamite is useless and only pops out again from the adamant earth, like from a gun.

Our shaft of eighteen feet, through frozen earth, was no light task, but we were well rewarded when at eighteen to twenty feet we "struck it" still richer. We proved beyond a doubt the auriferous richness of the region which, we were destined to learn, so soon after, extends over many hundreds of miles.

The winter in that region was certainly the most desolate I had ever put in in my life. Not that any faith should be placed in the "tall" travellers' yarns about an eternal night and all that sort of thing. The days are most certainly short, but if it were true, as some of the people declare, that there are only one or two hours of light per day for several months, the whole region would be uninhabitable. It is certainly not a lively place; the days in the winter have a way of shortening themselves, and the sun plays some queer pranks in these strange northern latitudes, but from nine or ten in the morning until three in the afternoon there is always daylight—such as it sometimes is—a cold, grey-drear light, but still daylight. But against this must be placed the short summer, when for about four months it hardly ever gets dark, and a day's work in the goldfield is limited only by the powers of endurance of the workers.

To those accustomed to the brisk, sharp

sunshiny winters of the States, the dreary leaden skies of the north, the still, numbing, seemingly never-ending cold, of the long, long winter will prove one of the greatest hardships to be endured.

Improve the trail to the goldfields, rob the trip of its dangers, its terrors, and its trials, all these are within human power to accomplish—there will always remain that dreadful winter with its polar blasts, its leaden grey days, and its utter loneliness. For not a thing that can serve for the sustenance of either man or beast can be raised in these barren, iron bound regions, and everything that means life has to be brought to these inhospitable latitudes from elsewhere.

Let this be borne in mind by those who will face all these drawbacks in the pursuit of gold. There have appeared interviews with various persons who have traversed the region, and who *affect* to make light of hardships and trials which at the time



probably appalled them. The pure air of California, Australia and South Africa has made of weaklings, strong men, but the climatic conditions of the Yukon, and the whole country north and south, east and west are totally different, and none but the strong, hearty and active can possibly make any headway here.

Even hardy men accustomed to a life in the mountain wilds experience the depressions of the utter desolation around.

But to return to the Pelly River and our narrative.

Although we had temporarily abandoned the exploration of the Upper Pelly, we spent the winter in getting out pay-dirt, until by calculation we had some \$10,000 on the dumps ready to be washed as soon as King Frost relaxed his iron bands in the Spring.

We relieved the monotony of our existence by frequent visits to Fort Selkirk, where we replenished our stores and exchanged news with the traders.

It was during our absence on one of these excursions to the trading post that Bruin came near demolishing our log house and making away with our stores. Pressed by hunger or cupidity Bruin had swooped down on the hut and had succeeded in breaking in, but our stores were mostly packed in tin cases, and these, hermetically sealed, baffled our visitors, for by the footprints round the log hut there were at least two, and possibly more of our neighbours concerned in this burglarious visit. Mr. Bruin contented himself with some biscuit, some sugar and a piece of very doubtful salt pork which had been condemned by a large majority of the encampment. The visitors had very considerably evacuated the post before we returned, or there might have been a stormy meeting. It was decided to at once take steps to secure these intruders, for we well knew that success would embolden them to return. The next few days resolved themselves into a bear hunt, during which we secured four

bear robes, and immunity from further annoyance.

It was difficult to realize that the mercury in the thermometer fell to 60 degrees below zero—a degree of cold that might have terrified a Montana cow-boy or an Idaho miner, who think “thirty below” a very cold “snap.”

A good log hut, the interstices stuffed with moss, or a “dug out” in a hill side, plenty of good food to eat, plenty of warm clothing to wear, a good fur sleeping bag and a fur robe are necessary to fight the cold and make life possible. But so dry is the atmosphere that it was difficult, as I said before, to realize that the mercury was at a standstill!

And the winter slowly dragged out until we had counted seven months of it, and the cracking of the ice in the river, and the warmer atmosphere, warned us of the coming of Spring.

It was positively heart-breaking, the

long, long wait for water to wash the stuff on the dump, from which it was possible to pick out some of the gold by hand as it lay there. How we anathematized the climate which barred us from attaining our ends! And as for the cold itself, it must be confessed that labour in the open with the mercury stuck in the thermometer, is exceedingly trying. The day of five or six hours was too long a stretch to work, beside the dump, particularly when the wind blew.

How eagerly we awaited the first breaking up of the ice. Then the crushing, rushing of the floes as they pressed each other onward to the mouth of the river and into the lakes, and finally the steady flow of the water itself!

And the slush! Thigh boots of rubber were essential, and work was only possible with these and a waterproof coat. It was positively pleasant to tramp through the slush, through anything, in fact, for a change from the snow. Is it necessary to relate how we

worked like beavers? We packed our gold dust securely in the empty corned beef tins—a tin representing when full \$2,000. In the three months by means of sluice boxes, we had washed out \$9,000.

The “sluice” is a long narrow box, open at either end, sometimes ten feet, oftentimes hundreds of feet in length, through which runs a stream of water from a height. The “pay dirt” or “gravel,” as it is called by English miners, is dumped into this sluice box, and the water running down the sloping incline, washes out the lighter earth, the particles of gold settling and being caught by a series of ledges in the bottom. There is a periodical “clean up” of this gold, and, of course, much more can be washed out in this way than in the “pan.” After the clean up, the stuff collected in the ledges is subjected to another operation called “panning out,” *i.e.*, washing in the pan.

And so the Spring wore on, and we had

decided to put in a whole summer on the Pelly River, and spend the winter in some more congenial clime in the South, renew outfits and go up the Pelly again when the ice broke up. But our plans were destined to be considerably altered.

All this time I may say we were keeping our find to ourselves, and we succeeded. It was, so far, simply a case of taking out gold without fee, license or interference. No claims to stake out, and none to jump. We claimed everything in sight, simply by right of sole occupation—until some other prospectors should come blundering along and have our find “proclaimed.”

There can be no doubt that the creeks and tributaries of the Pelly and Stewart Rivers, and the whole region lying between them, is rich enough to console many of those who must eventually find the district around Dawson all staked out as far as the source of the Klondyke River.

We staked out claims now, as a precaution against any possibility of prospectors coming our way, and commenced preparations for moving camp, and prospecting up the Pelly River as soon as possible. We had no idea then, that the river forked again hundreds of miles further up, or that the gold we had unearthed was only a portion of a much richer field, the whole of which had been brought here from remoter regions by glacial and other actions. Soon the salmon are coming up the river, and the bears are once again in clover. And with the salmon, the Indian salmon-catcher appears; he drags the fish out in thousands and dries them for dog food. The Indians, also, eat the salmon, and sometimes it is cured so as to be edible to white men hard pressed by hunger.

Without machinery and labour, timber, and other necessities, it was, of course, impossible to go on with tunnelling, and as the surface or placer mining was profitable,

we decided to keep the shaft for future use. It certainly proved that the district was auriferous all the way through.

Gold, it should be explained, is, in placers, found in the shape of what is technically termed "dust," the dust really consisting of grains, particles, and sometimes nuggets. The gold does not belong there, but has been carried by streams, or rivers, or by glacial action washed out of the mountains, out of the "mother lode," perhaps. *Quien sabe?* but ground out and eventually brought there. This is the reason it is found in the beds and banks of rivers and streams, and in that which was once such. The gold sank, according to its weight, in the mud, amongst the stones, and *debris*, and so it is that the richer deposits are opened later by means of scientific mining. There is this difference between quartz mining and "placer" mining. The one can only be carried out with the aid of large capital, to command labour and scientific machinery; the other



is the opportunity of the poor man, and is within the means of everyone who brings two strong, willing arms, a pick, shovel, and large amount of perseverance to work. But in quartz mining the "formation" of the district gives the prospector information of the existence of the precious metal. The "placer" gives no sign. It is a pure gamble, in which the prospector is taking the same chances as if he were throwing dice—with the chances on the dice.

The world rings with the success of one, but it is strangely silent over the failures of hundreds. Everyone learns about the man who reaches civilization with a fortune in his valise, but no one ever hears of the ghastly failures, the hopeless wrecks of fortune, the human flotsam and jetsam, cast up, by the tide of wild ambitions and unaccomplished ends, on the shores of blank despair.

## CHAPTER XII.

I STATED, we were making active preparations for prospecting the source of the Pelly River, and our itinerary, therefore, included a run up to Fort Selkirk for a supply of provisions. We knew that the steamer would soon be there with a fresh supply of stores, and we were quite unprepared for any contingency that might arise to delay the boat on its regular annual visit.

The steamer expected was the *Portus R. Weare*, and her arrival could be usually reckoned upon to within a few days. But the days followed each other and still no

*Weare.* The folks at the trading post became anxious and were preparing to send up to Sixty Mile to learn, if possible, the cause of the delay, when the dramatic incident occurred that sent the blood leaping and bounding through the veins of every man at this outpost of civilization.

The *Weare's* signal was heard as she steamed round the bend of the river, but instead of a white crew there were only Indians. We soon heard the story from the Captain.

Carmack, a salmon-hunter on the Klondyke River, and a man who couldn't distinguish between gold quartz and iron pyrites, had with his Indian helpers prospected up the Klondyke and found gold so thickly strewn in the beds of the creeks that all one had to do was to pick out the lumps as large as walnuts. This man Carmack was filling bags full of the gold and had sent two of his Indians to the Indian village, which lies half-way between

Forty Mile and Sixty Mile, to await the *Weare* and get supplies. The Indians told the news to the captain and crew. The story of fortune proved too strong for the crew to resist. They deserted in a body and rushed off to the new goldfields. As soon as the steamer would return and tell the news down the Yukon, prospectors, miners, and everybody would rush two thousand miles to get there and stake the region out. Our plans were soon formed. We must get there without delay.

How quickly three miners could get out of quarters they had occupied a year on the shores of a lonely desolate river, with the nearest human habitation twenty miles away, need not be entered into. The traders at Fort Selkirk were dubious. They had heard of rich strikes before, but with visions of the "mother lode" dancing before our eyes we were soon outfitted and packed in the boat—the steamboat this time—and were not long in reaching what

is now Dawson City and the heart of the new goldfields.

Dawson City then, consisted of tents and huts of the deserters from the little steamer. The nearest township was Forty Mile City, a respectable village of good log dwellings. To-day, Forty Mile City is a settlement of empty houses, not even a dog disturbing the death-like stillness, whilst Dawson is spreading out with its log huts and its canvas tents.

Upon reaching the Klondyke River we were soon convinced of the truth of the Indians' assertions about the gold find.

After pitching camp we started prospecting, and what we saw was sufficient to turn the brain of any miner who had been toiling for years and imagining a dollar a pan—that is, a dollar's worth of gold in a panful of pay dirt—as the height of his ambition. But we soon had reason for congratulating ourselves upon having abandoned profitable workings for the wild stories of the Indians.

The good people of Forty Mile, Sixty Mile, and Circle City knew nothing of the "strike," and when they did, it took some time to convince them that the Klondyke River and the whole region of the Canadian Yukon was a veritable "Tom Tiddler's" ground. It was a case of first come, first served. But the first comers are not always the best served in placer mining. And so it happened in Carmack's case, for those who came after him found gravel ten times as auriferous as he did. Here was wealth for the mere picking up. At least, it was so for the new comers and the more fortunate and energetic.

The first contingent representing the City of London to arrive on the fields was Messrs. Burke, Grealey and Wallace, all practical miners sent out by that shrewd operator Wm. F. Regan, of Threadneedle-street. The party was certainly one of the best equipped, and the men seemed prepared for any amount of obstacles. Their instructions

were characteristic of their employer—"Go in and win at any cost."

We prospected judiciously and staked out claims along the Klondyke, about three miles from Dawson, which is named after the eminent Canadian geologist, Dr. Dawson. In those days it was a "go-as-you-please," without any of the formalities which follow in the train of a "rush." For the rush had not commenced then.

I had once in California taken from a sluice-box a nugget weighing \$65. It was embedded in gold dust so fine and light that it was almost a wonder that the dust was not carried through the sluice by the rush of water.

But here, lump after lump, with but a variation of a pennyweight or two, was taken out. It was little less than wonderful. In my wildest dreams I had never conceived such a find of gold. It was as near the "mother-lode" as ever I wanted to get. It was not merely on one spot, but spread over

a region which promises to extend from a hundred or more miles to the North, clear down to the Pelly River.

“Dust” is the technical term for gold found in placer mines, the “dust” really consisting of grains and specks of the dull yellow metal. But the gold dust on the Klondyke placers was distinctly a misnomer. Flakes, pellets and nuggets, running as large as hazel nuts, and not singly, but every piece alike. That was the gold “dust” that was washed and picked out of the black pay dirt of the Yukon Valley. What struck me as most remarkable was the regularity of the nuggets, rounded off as by some wonderful action of Nature.

No wonder we nearly went mad with excitement, and trembled, lest we should wake up to find it a dream. I vividly remember those days—the happiest of my life—and the feeling of dreams of sudden wealth realised. How we toiled and struggled! No day’s labour was too much



for us, albeit the daylight served, easily, twenty hours out of the twenty-four. No one there seemed to tire of piling the dust into the tin cans, the roughly-made deerskin bags, and finally, when these all overflowed, into the oil cans.

The inhabitants of Circle City and other townships in the Yukon Valley soon commenced to pour in, making Dawson quite a presentable place, and although the Yankees from the American side tried to make Dawson another "tough" town, the little force of Canadian Mounted Police—only 20 strong, but as fine a body of men as can be found—handled these admirably, and they either retired over the border again or ran on honest lines. Of course, there was, as there always is in mining camps, plenty of gambling: Stud poker, faro, in fact, the games that rule everywhere, where thousands are made in a minute. I have seen men stake and lose claims worth \$60,000 in a night. The

saloon keepers, who run the card tables and issue chips against gold dust, "clean up" more in a night than most prospectors during the day. There was no beer to be had at that time, and whisky cost 50 cents, which was not excessive. Nor was the price of provisions higher than ruled in many other goldfields. Flour \$6 (24s.) a sack; beans, 15 cents ( $7\frac{1}{2}$ d.) a lb.; a pound of bacon cost 50 cents; coffee was as low as 25 cents, while tea was a dollar—not more than is paid in big cities 2,000 miles nearer civilization.

Later, prices jumped somewhat, but a great many of the fancy figures quoted by returned miners and American newspaper correspondents are airy flights of fancy. If a shovel was worth \$10 to a miner who needed one and he had a tin of corned beef he didn't particularly want, and traded it for the shovel, then it followed that 2 lbs. of corned beef fetched \$10.

It was quite an ordinary occurrence to wash

out \$50 in one pan. Men who had been working for \$25 a week in the townships around, scoffed at an offer of the same rate of wages per diem.

“Tenderfeet”—men who could not distinguish between a gold reef and a marble quarry—were here washing out hundreds of dollars a day with as much unconcern as though this was quite an ordinary affair in gold mining. That they did not fully appreciate the extraordinary nature of these placers, did not interfere with their filling every receptacle they possessed with the precious metal. Sacks, bags, valises, tin provision cans were requisitioned to pack the dust and nuggets. And what was still more extraordinary to miners used to the mining camps of the Western States there was a total absence of that “tough” element, of the “bad men,” who frequently terrorize a whole community, and of the shooting that forms part and parcel of the daily routine of not only mining camps but

"cities" in the States, where lawlessness runs rampant. There was certainly not much work for the small force of mounted police.

It was quite usual to go to work in the early morning, leaving thousands of dollars value in gold in the cabin, and find it safe and untouched upon one's return. When the "rush" commenced and prospectors left their supplies on the wayside to be brought on later, they were as safe there, unprotected, as though there had been no one around.

It was somewhat different later when the "toughs" of the Pacific Coast commenced to pour in, but with them there arrived further detachments of mounted police under command of officers who had done splendid service against the Indians in the past—men who would stand no nonsense from the "toughs" no matter where they came from, and who gave the latter to understand as much as soon as they arrived.

But to return to the gold. In the process of washing the "tenderfoot" frequently wasted time and money together. The process is simplicity itself—when you know it. The gold pan (any circular tin dish or basin will answer the purpose) is filled nearly to the brim with "pay dirt" and is then held in a hole full of water, or else under a running stream, and twisted to and fro to dissolve the dirt and wash it out, leaving the heavier gold to sink to the bottom of the pan. But the "tenderfoot," of course, was not so deft at the pan as the "old timer," and wasted a good deal of time looking for nuggets.

It would be idle to deny that the old stagers were just as excited as the "green-horns." I should be afraid to tell how many hours a day we toiled without feeling hunger, thirst, or fatigue. It was an experience of a lifetime, and the feeling of sudden wealth was worth many years of toil and privation.

## CHAPTER XIII.

MEN who had been employers and counted rich in the back woods settlements, suddenly found that their quondam *employeés* were able to buy them up, lock, stock, and barrel. It was the world turned upside down. The poor man of yesterday found himself, to-day, a transformed being. Nothing was too good for him when the purchasing price of a dog or a week's stores could be picked out from a heap of pay dirt. Men went wild with the excitement of seeing so much gold.

The Alaska Commercial Company's safes were full to overflowing and they were actually refusing to store any more. Miners

who had been penniless but a few weeks before, were offering fabulous prices for a share or the whole of other claims. At Dawson City gold dust was taken in payment for goods at \$16 (£4) to the ounce—a good thing for the storekeepers. As soon as it became apparent that the “gold fever” would spread to the mouth of the Yukon, the Alaska Commercial Company, in order to discourage the “tough” element and to keep out those who, coming in penniless, would become a burden to those already on the fields, issued strict injunctions to all their trading posts not to give a cent credit. Everything had to be paid cash down. At every point from which gold-seekers might pour into the country, warnings were issued against proceeding to the gold fields without food sufficient to live through the winter. These precautions proved a salutary check upon a “rush” of paupers who would certainly have starved or become a burden on the hands of others.

At this time many miners were laying bets that they could pick out of their claims a thousand dollars in so many minutes ; others were vainly offering to wager thousands upon the contents of a single pan.

Claim after claim showed similar results. Wages were then \$25 a day, and very few takers. But, when later, the claims extended several miles up the river, some men, not venturesome enough to go and prospect, were found to accept \$15 and \$20 a day, and certainly earned every penny of it.

With the gold amassing into hundreds of thousands the necessities of the miners increased. Champagne and truffles would have been snapped up regardless of price, had they been procurable, whereas a few weeks before beer was nectar to some of these people.

In our own cabin we had six two-gallon kerosene cans full to the brim with gold, and we were fast filling a large grain leather hand-bag and the corned beef tins. Although



we carried "shooting-irons"—more from custom in the States—we never saw any reason for being armed, even though fortunes were being piled up in the huts of the miners. I saw a man go to work one morning, and return at night with \$1,400 worth of gold.

The same man that night, in a bar-room in Dawson, called for two whiskies and two cigars, drank to his former self in the one, making believe that his former self was having the other, and then stuck the two cigars in his mouth and smoked them together.

Another man made a bet that if he didn't take out \$10,000 in the week he would crawl backwards through Dawson on his hands and knees. He crawled.

Another swore that if he reached Seattle with \$50,000 he would ride through the streets of that city in evening dress on a coal waggon. He did.

But these were only a few of the notions

that took the fancy of men, suddenly become independent of Fortune's favours. As one of them told me in a confidential burst of enthusiasm and bad whiskey, "I've been up to my neck in water (hydraulic mining) for ten years, and I'm going to spend the rest of my life up to my neck in liquor!"

All this time Dawson City was increasing in size. Every day lone travellers hitched to a sledge with a dog, or in groups of two or three, would come in from Fort Cudahy, Circle City and other points near the frontier, to swell the population. At one time twelve saloons were flourishing, more or less, until the watchful eyes of the police discovered something wrong and reduced the number to eight, one of them having actually brought a piano (from Heaven knows where), which, although somewhat out of tune, was hailed with enthusiasm on all sides. It must have been the arrival of the piano that caused the whiskey "straight" to pall, for with the advent of this pioneer of refinement

arose a demand for "mixed" drinks. Whiskey with a dash of "bitters" in it cost a dollar.

A miner who could "vamp" upon the piano was offered any price he liked to name to take the position of pianist. But lest this should fire some aspiring musician to journey to Dawson, let me hasten to add that another arrival, really a pianist and a musician, upon commencing a choice *morceau*, was hit in the neck by a well-aimed rag that had been used to wipe up the counter.

Dawson, unlike Johannesburg, San Francisco, Sydney, and other centres of gold mining and gold finds, is not destined to become a grand residential district. It will always be a rough working town. No one in possession of his senses could ever contemplate permanent settlement in such a region. Last summer Dawson presented a peculiar appearance, canvas tents jostled log huts all along the streets and avenues,

which had previously been carefully laid out by the pioneer Ladue. Whether it will become a fixed settlement, or whether it is doomed to be deserted as quickly as it was populated, through richer finds elsewhere, it would be extremely difficult to conjecture. Many of those on the ground express a belief that richer fields exist somewhere in the district, maybe further East or perhaps in the North.

But to return to the mining. It was remarkable, the feverish haste with which the miners worked, to get out as much of the dull yellow metal as they could, before the first frosts of September should prevent further washing. There was also a general feeling of uneasiness as to the food supply for the winter, and many, if not most, of the men on the ground toiled at the pans with the full intention of making as much as possible for a winter's rest at some of the towns on the coast.

All this time, of course, the gold was

literally overflowing in the camp, and the next boat for St. Michael's was eagerly awaited to convey the first contingent of miners home for the winter, and also to take away the store of gold that had accumulated. The first steamer from Forty Mile could not carry it all, but took away forty of the prospectors with their belongings to the outer world and civilisation.

My partners and I had amassed sufficient to keep ourselves for the rest of our lives, and it became necessary to send our treasure to a place of safety. So one of our number went aboard with a greater portion of our gold. He would journey down the Yukon, a tedious voyage of 2,500 miles, to the little town of St. Michael's, and then take the small coasting steamer to San Francisco. He would proceed to Calgary, British Columbia, there purchase fresh supplies and come in again over the Canadian trail.

How the news spread like wildfire in

St. Michael's and later in San Francisco, and eventually all over the civilised world, has been told so graphically in the columns of the *Tacoma Daily Ledger* that I cannot do better than quote the dramatic account:—

“July 11th, 1897, the little steamer *Excelsior* arrived in the harbour of San Francisco with forty miners on board, each of whom had brought with him from the ice-bound interior of Alaska a fortune in gold. This was the beginning of the Klondyke gold craze, which may be said to exceed the three other gold crazes of the century, California in 1849, Australia in 1851, and South Africa in 1890.

“It is now known that the amount brought back by the returning miners has exceeded \$1,000,000, and it is said that at least one million more will arrive before the year is out. The forty men who came down in the *Excelsior* from the port of St. Michael's had among them a large amount

in gold dust. They exhibited whole hatfuls of it. The so-called dust ranged in size from a hazelnut to fine birdshot and grains of sand. They had gone to the Klondyke penniless and came back with fortunes varying from \$5,000 to \$90,000. They told extraordinary stories of their experiences in the mining country. While they described the vast amounts of gold in the region, their stories were so tempered with cautious warnings against a mad rush for the new fields that their statements gained credence through their very conservatism.

“And when, later, the steamer *Portland* arrived on Puget Sound with more miners aboard and a large amount in bullion the country went gold mad. It seems as though the days of the argonauts of 1849 have returned again.

“Few scenes have been more striking in mining history than that which occurred on the day when the miners landed from the *Excelsior*. Weather beaten, roughly

dressed, with straggling beards and furrowed cheeks they marched straight to the smelting works and brought out bags of gold, dirty and worn, containing thousands of dollars worth of precious metal. The bags were weighed and then ripped open with a knife and the contents allowed to scatter over the counter. Then came bundles of all shapes and sizes. There was gold in fruit jars and jelly tumblers and even writing paper, carefully secured with twine.

“This was the first that the world had ever heard of the Klondyke region. The miners told of the new Eldorado, how it was situated on the Klondyke river nearly 2,000 miles from the mouth of the Yukon, how it just escaped the Artic circle by a bare 250 miles, and was situated in Canadian territory.

“But their story was not all one of joy and gladness. They told of the frightful hardships which they had been compelled to



undergo before they reached the marvellous gold fields. Joseph Ladue, who left Plattsburg, N.Y., a few years ago an impecunious farm hand, described how he had forced his way into the new diggings and established the city of Dawson, which is the centre of the gold district. But Ladue also spoke strongly against those who would rush madly to the new field without considering the hardships.

“He spoke of starvation and want which would be sure to be the fate of those who went unprepared, for they would find winter setting in with arctic vigour. They would be shut up in an ice-bound region, hundreds of miles from telegraph or post office, a prey to all the horrors of the climate. Ladue said that Dawson City, which he had founded, had a population when the miners left of 3,500 and it was laid out on modern lines, with 60 foot avenues and 50 foot streets, and had all the ambitious scope of a bonanza town.”

This Ladue went from the Eastern States to Alaska without a cent. He had been a farm hand working for \$10 a month. He now counts himself a millionaire.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## WOMEN ARE WANTED.

CAMP angels for the Klondyke are scarce, but there are occasional glimpses of young women who are ready to try their luck to earn an honest living and, mayhap, make a fortune.

Perhaps this aspiration on the part of young women to try the ventures of the Yukon is stimulated, somewhat, by the stories of miners who go in poor and unknown, strike a bonanza, clean up a few hundred thousand dollars, and start down the river on the steamers, to fall a victim to the first good-looking woman that falls across their vision, or perhaps one not so good looking.

The story of the bonanza king, inexperienced in the ways of women, who fell captive to a young Swedish servant maid, because she was the first woman he saw after leaving the camp, is a case in point, and the prospect of newly made millionaires going down the river by scores in the closing days of the next season is an alluring one for the young woman with a spice of adventure in her make-up, who would have a splendid chance to make her pick among the most desirable.

Women who can cook, make bread, mend clothes and do the thousand and more things that a woman can do better than a man, and twice as quick, earn all the way from \$25 to \$100 per week in the Klondyke, and have the respect and adoration of a large circle of true and loyal friends.

That there are women willing to brave all the hardships of life in the Klondyke is evidenced by the following letter, addressed to a company trading in the Klondyke, by a young woman of Lowell, Mass. :—

“Any Klondyke settlement in need of a camp angel would do well to apply to the undersigned, who is young, single, good looking and intelligent, with good disposition, and a constitution warranted to withstand the wear and tear of any amount of hardship and deprivations in the cause of novel experiences, and who is a first-class cook, a graduated dressmaker and a tailoress of some experience, who can make and mend.

“Whoever assists in transplanting this New England flower will be obliged to assume the expense of transportation, for, being only 22 years old, she has never earned more than enough for her every day needs, and is without friends who would spend any money to help her to go so far away.

“Anyone wishing to invest the amount needed in this way, and who can furnish references, endorsed by any bank or the Y.M.C.A., may have my numerous refer-

ences, which I will have endorsed by the W.C.T.U. of my city, and also my photograph."

The young woman evidently means business and will make her way in the faraway land, where she will have a better chance for her good qualities to develop than in the circumscribed limits of a settled New England town; yet she apparently knows enough of the ways of the world to keep herself, in a measure, safe behind the "references."

It is altogether likely that the women who have the courage and good health and the enterprise to make the trip, and who can do anything useful after they reach the Klondyke, will stand, perhaps, a better chance than some of the men of making a stake, even if they do not become millionaires.

But my advice to English women is to leave it strictly alone. The outfit alone would cost as much as would set up a small business at home. Some idea of the outfit

necessary to brave the rigours of this zone may be gathered from a description given by a woman in Circle City to her friend in San Francisco.

For underwear, a fleece lined woollen combination garment, heavy wool stockings, over which comes a sack of reindeer fur (the fur on the inside), to this is added a pair of sealskin boots, the hair of which has been shaved off, the leg of the boot reaching to the knee. Next an oversuit of chamois or buckskin, with reindeer trousers or bloomers, and a long ulster of fur or other very warm material. A fur hood covering head, ears, and mouth, and fur mittens, complete the costume.

But to those women who may be contemplating going to Klondyke, I would repeat Punch's advice to those about to marry, unless, of course, they go with a male escort.

## CHAPTER XV.

So much has been written against the Klondyke by the American Press—written when it was definitely settled that the vast goldfields were *all* on the British side—that it is a wonder, these statements have remained unchallenged. In the first flush of the discovery of the gold fields, the public were told of the riches that awaited the venturesome fortune-hunter. But they faced about with a suddenness that was ludicrous in the extreme, and “jumped on” the Canadian Klondyke and, simultaneously, made a vain but frantic attempt to “boom” Alaska as though it were a part and



parcel of the new goldfield. The American public is not so easily fooled, knowing, as they do, their Alaskan history, and of the many attempts in the past to get up a "boom" for the white elephant which the United States purchased from Russia, Alaska is pointed out by interested American "boomers" and company promoters as a vast goldfield, but extensive prospecting and mining during 22 years (1868 to 1890) have yielded little over four million dollars, or as much as was taken out of the Klondyke River in as many weeks.

In my opinion, and it is shared by all experienced miners, as well as geologists who have visited the regions, there is a vast field for new enterprise on the Stewart and the Mackenzie Rivers, and back of the Klondyke, North and East. But I do not wish to imply that fortunes are there for the seeking.

As I remarked in a previous chapter, there are plenty of disappointed ones whom

the world will never hear of, and, at the time I left Dawson City, there were quite a few loafers hanging around who declared they could not get work. It is in the nature of things that there should be drones where there is honey, and, while all the statements regarding the "unemployed" in Dawson are fabulous, still, even with work plentiful at \$15 per day—a rate which, by the way, must steadily fall to \$7 or \$8—a man does not want to pay away £200 on outfit and passage, to expatriate himself to such an exile, for the sake of, even, the former rate of wage.

## CHAPTER XVI.

PRIOR to the proclamation of the goldfield it was a veritable Tom Tiddler's ground where one could roam at one's own sweet will picking up the gold, but now it is all changed. After pegging out the claim, the prospector has to hunt up the Gold Commissioner and file his claim and pay the fees. And, if the claim falls short of the 500 feet allowed, there is no calling it back. The miner simply has to stand the loss.

Then came the regulations governing placer mining in the Yukon and its tributaries, including the Klondyke. These are important at this moment when so many are looking to the West. The regulations

open with explanation of technical terms. These are as follow:—

“Bar diggings” shall mean any part of a river over which the water extends when the water is in its flooded state, and which is not covered at low water.

Mines on benches shall be known as “bench diggings” and shall for the purpose of defining the size of such claims be excepted from dry diggings.

“Dry diggings” shall mean any mine over which a river never extends.

“Miner” shall mean any male or female over the age of 18, but not under that age.

“Claim” shall mean the personal right of property in a placer mine or diggings during the time for which the grant of such mine or diggings is made.

“Legal post” shall mean a stake standing not less than four feet above the ground and squared on four sides for at least one foot from the top. Both sides so squared shall measure at least four inches across the face

It shall also mean any stump or tree cut off and squared or faced to the above height and size.

“Close season” shall mean the period of the year during which placer mining is generally suspended. The period to be fixed by the Gold Commissioner in whose district the claim is situated.

“Locality” shall mean the territory along a river (tributary of the Yukon river) and its affluents.

“Mineral” shall include all minerals whatsoever other than coal.

#### SIZE OF CLAIMS.

“Bar diggings,” a strip of land 100 feet wide at high water mark and thence extending into the river to its lowest water level.

The sides of a claim for bar diggings shall be two parallel lines run as nearly as possible at right angles to the stream, and shall be marked by four legal posts, one at

each end of the claim at or about high water mark, also one at each end of the claim at or about the edge of water. One of the posts at high water mark shall be legibly marked with the name of the miner and the date upon which the claim was staked.

Dry diggings shall be 100 feet square, and shall have placed at each of its four corners a legal post upon one of which shall be legibly marked the name of the miner and the date upon which the claim was staked.

Creek and river claims shall be 500 feet long, measured in the direction of the general course of the stream, and shall extend in width from base to base of the hill or bench on each side, but when the hills or benches are less than 100 feet apart the claim may be 100 feet in depth. The sides of a claim shall be two parallel lines run as nearly as possible at right angles to the stream. The sides shall be marked with

legal posts at or about the edge of the water and at the rear boundaries of the claim. One of the legal posts at the stream shall be legibly marked with the name of the miner and the date upon which the claim was staked.

Bench claims shall be 100 feet square.

In defining the size of claims they shall be measured horizontally, irrespective of inequalities on the surface of the ground.

If any person or persons shall discover a new mine and such discovery shall be established to the satisfaction of the Gold Commissioner a claim for bar diggings 750 feet in length may be granted.

#### THE FEES.

A claim shall be recorded with the Gold Commissioner in whose district it is situated within three days after the location thereof, if it is located within ten miles of the Commissioner's office. One extra day shall be allowed for making such record for every additional ten miles or fraction thereof.

Entry shall not be granted for a claim which has not been staked by the applicant in person in the manner specified in these regulations. An affidavit that the claim was staked out by the applicant shall be made.

An entry fee of \$15 shall be charged the first year, and an annual fee of \$100 for each of the following years. This provision shall apply to locations for which entries have already been granted.

The entry of every holder of a grant for placer mining must be renewed and his receipt relinquished and replaced every year, the entry fee being paid each time.

#### CLAIMS LIMITED.

No miner shall receive a grant of more than one mining claim in the same locality, but the same miner may hold any number of claims by purchase, and any number of miners may unite to work their claims in common upon such terms as they may



arrange, provided such agreement be registered with the Gold Commissioner and a fee of \$5 paid for each registration.

Any miner or miners may sell, mortgage, or dispose of his or their claims, provided such disposal be registered with, and a fee of \$2 paid to, the Gold Commissioner.

Every miner shall, during the continuance of his grant, have the exclusive right of entry upon his own claim, for the miner-like working thereof, and the construction of a residence thereon, and shall be entitled exclusively to all the proceeds realized therefrom; but he shall have no surface rights therein; and the Gold Commissioner may grant to the holders of adjacent claims such right of entry thereon as may be absolutely necessary for the working of their claims, upon such terms as may to him seem reasonable.

#### FORFEITURE OF CLAIMS.

A claim shall be deemed to be abandoned and open to occupation and entry

by any person when the same shall have remained unworked on working days by the grantee thereof or by some person on his behalf for the space of seventy-two hours, unless sickness or other reasonable cause be shown to the satisfaction of the Gold Commissioner, or unless the grantee is absent on leave given by the Commissioner. The regulation further declares that disputes as to ownership shall be settled by arbitration.

## CHAPTER XVII.

FOR the information of those who may believe that the rush of next season will cover all the available goldfields, and leave nothing for new-comers to take, it may be as well to note that, of the western tributaries of the Mackenzie, enough is known to show that on the Headwaters of the Peace, Laird and Peel Rivers there are from 150,000 to 200,000 square miles which may be considered auriferous. In addition to these, gold has been found on the west shores of Hudson's Bay, and has been said to exist in certain portions of the Barren Grounds. There are extensive coal and asphaltum deposits on the

lower Mackenzie ; copper upon the Coppermine River ; iron graphite, ochre, brick, and pottery clay, mica, gypsum, lime and sandstone, and sand for glass and moulding are all known to exist ; while the petroleum area is so extensive as to justify the belief that eventually it will supply a great part of the world. So that those who may be disappointed at the Klondyke—and there will be hundreds—may have an opportunity of startling the world with another Klondyke. But a word of warning to those adventurous spirits. Remember, this is not prospecting in the temperate climate of California, the health-giving pine regions of Colorado, or the sunny, and salubrious, veldt of the Transvaal. The rigours of Arctic travel, with all that that implies, the numbing cold, which can only be resisted with plenty to eat and plenty to wear, the illimitable solitude, the dreary days of an eight months winter, terribly rough roads, and, in many regions, the bears, all must be taken into

account. Yet all these difficulties have been faced and overcome by hardy and resolute men.

I have heard that many fortune-hunters who started helter-skelter for the goldfields and reached the White and the Chilcoot Passes, when brought face to face with the real hardships they must undergo for many weary days before really commencing to rough it in the camp, became disheartened, and, selling off their outfits at any sacrifice, made tracks for home. So, after all, the terrible-looking passes have served the good purpose of keeping out a lot of people who would have made things unpleasant for others already there.

But the absence of a food centre nearer than the store on the American border was bad judgment on the part of the traders who had all the summer to establish a store of several hundred tons at Dawson. And this scarcity, when gold enough was on hand to buy all the luxuries of the earth, made

itself felt on all sides. The gloomiest views prevailed as to the possibility of staying in the Klondyke. To abandon a claim is to run the risk of forfeiture. And that the miners were willing to pay well for food supplies is evidenced by the following letter from one of the claim-holders to a friend occupying a position of great responsibility on the Coast:—

“YUKON RIVER, DAWSON CITY.

“Friend,—You will no doubt be surprised to know that I am up here. I came here a year ago this spring. I have a claim on El Dorado Creek, which runs into the Klondyke River. I had a partner who came here with me and died last winter. We had a mild winter, and it is not so cold as some say or think.

“I came down to Dawson to send this off, as the boat leaves in a few days. Now to business. I told you when I saw you last that I would turn up all right in time, and so I have. The gold mines here are wonderful—

the biggest in the world. You would not credit half I could tell you, but as there will be some gold going to Portland you will see for yourself. Now I want to ask you, can you come to this place at once? There was a claim next to mine that sold for \$60,000 a few days ago. I will not send any gold out this time. I washed out in six days about \$6,000, and I want to stay here another year or two. Provisions are going to be very scarce. If you will pack up and leave Portland at once and bring up grub enough to last three of us one year, we will give you a half interest in the biggest thing you ever struck.

“As you know, I am an old miner and know what I say. I am sure that in one year from now we three—you, my partner and I—can take out \$500,000 and not try at all. My cabin is half a mile from the digging, and many a time I pick up little nuggets that will weigh from an ounce to two ounces. I was on Cook

Inlet a long time. We have been here only four months, and have over \$30,000 to show. How is that? Now, don't listen to anyone. You come up here. It will take only \$500 worth of provisions. Come by the way of Juneau—never mind the expense, it will beat living in Portland, anyway.

“One man will take out \$200,000 this trip for four months' work by himself. What we want is food and plenty of it. If you will come and take this offer we will let you in as we say. We have got the biggest thing of any of them. I have made the offer to two others, so come as quick as you can. I know you have the money and can come if you want to, still I cannot afford to wait. Business is business, you know. I shall expect you on the September boat at Dawson if you come that way, but if you come the other way we will wait a reasonable time. As for gold, we have more gold than bread. I may get a million out of my claim if my ground figures out all right.



“I got \$330 out of one pan full of dirt not over ten pounds weight. There were over thirty-nine nuggets in all. No more now.”

Here was a man who, to ensure a food supply for one year for himself and partner, was willing to give half his interest in a very big thing. It would be safe to wager that if a party could enter Dawson about Christmas, they could, for a ton of stores acquire a million dollars' worth of claims.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

I REFERRED, in a previous chapter, to my leaving Dawson. After packing our treasure out of the Yukon Valley, I discovered that, with what I possessed and the amount my partners had agreed upon to pay me out, I had reached my limit. I was not long in following our partner down the Yukon. Shall I ever forget that last day in Dawson. When I looked back upon the months spent in the Yukon Valley it all seemed like a dream—a pleasant one, I confess. Here was I, who had seen a good deal of life in nearly fifteen years of pioneer prospecting work, enriched after only a few months' toil! I weighed the hardships

against the results, and the balance was very much in favour of the latter. Of course, a man accustomed to a life of ease and comfort finds it extremely hard to be suddenly faced with the terrible cold, the semi-privations, which, after all, are incidental to all pioneer work, and the unusual manual labour.

But all the vivid descriptions of extreme hardships are vastly overdrawn by explorers and travellers who appear to have no idea of the life led by those on the plains, in the backwoods, and on the frontier. The Montana cowboy, who faces the fiercest blizzards, who rides as many miles a day as his "string" of ten or a dozen horses can cover, and subsists mainly upon cheap bacon and black coffee and bread—the lumber-men in the logging camps of Canada—and many more are subjected to quite as much hardship, hardships which it would be impossible for most city-bred men to endure.

And with regard to reports in the American press, extensively copied over

here, that many of the miners who have come from the Klondyke shrunk with horror at the idea of returning, this is a gross exaggeration. Nearly all my fellow-passengers down the Yukon were going back with the Spring. They were simply forced to leave the wealth where it lay, by reason of the want of forethought of the traders, who have lost a golden opportunity of gathering in a goodly proportion of the harvest of the Klondyke.

## CHAPTER XIX.

A FEW DONT'S FOR PROSPECTIVE  
KLONDYKERS.

DON'T undertake the journey unless you are hardy, able-bodied and prepared to rough it.

DON'T go to Dawson City. That part of the Klondyke is staked out in claims for miles around. But strike out for one of the other rivers.

DON'T expect to find them all Klondykes. They may, however, give you a competence after a few years' work.

DON'T buy an outfit in any of the

American cities. The outfitters will "sell" you as well as the goods.

Don't fit out in England. You can procure cheaper and far more suitable outfits in Canada, where the traders understand the requirements of the country, and save you all the trouble of carrying the outfit to Canada.

Don't go singly, but form or join a party of, say, six or eight, and pool your interests.

Don't go without a year's provisions and all the articles enumerated in the outfit list.

Don't believe the "Yankee," that the gold is in Alaska. It is in the *Canadian* Yukon.

Don't be led to believe that there is more room for prospecting in Alaska than there is on Canadian soil. There is room and gold enough in the Klondyke, and that region, for a hundred thousand miners.

Don't cross the Chilcoot Pass in the Spring, but take the Lake Teslin trail from Fort Wrangel, or the all-Canadian route.

There are dangerous snow-storms on the summit of the Chilcoot in the Spring.

DON'T forget snow-shoes, a good sled with sound *steel* runners, plenty of good blankets, and tools for boat building.

DON'T go across the ocean as a saloon passenger. If you can't stand the "steerage" you will certainly not weather the Klondyke.

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#### SOME ADDITIONAL ADVICE.

PACK all perishable goods in oilskin bags. Matches and candles wrap in waterproof wrapping and pack in a tin.

There is only one way to pack an outfit. That is in bundles—not in boxes.

If you should lose part of your outfit in the snow, the Indians, with long slender rods tipped with iron, "feel" down into the snow and can easily fish out the packages.

In fixing up a stove, make a "gridiron"

of three or four poles laid on the snow or the ground and fix your stove upon it. The snow will melt beneath, but the firm snow under the ends of the poles will support the stoves.

In building a boat it should be borne in mind that the double-ended batteau is the best, but the ordinary scow is the easiest to build.

The trees selected should be straight and about 12 inches in diameter at the butt. Build a saw pit near the tree, cut down the tree and saw it into logs about 25 feet long. From these the boards are sawed. It requires experience, good tools and hard work to build the boat. One of the party should have some experience in boat-building.

Don't attempt to shoot the rapids. The last pioneers who attempted it, at the Five Fingers, left a bundle of blankets to mark the place where they disappeared.

Do not wait until the summer to travel,



as, the colder it is, the better is the travelling.  
Secure Indian guides.

Although the winter lasts nine months  
you can live in a tent the other three  
months—but you want plenty of mosquito  
netting.

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